# A CRITICAL STUDY OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES (SMCs) AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL IN TRIBAL AREAS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

## A
## SYNOPSIS

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**THE TITLE**

***"A Critical Study of School Management Committees (SMCs) at Elementary Level in Tribal Areas of Himachal Pradesh"***

Education is a tool that can play a vital role in improving the socio-economic conditions of any nation. It empowers citizens with analytic abilities that lead to better confidence and fortifies one with power and goal setting competencies. Education improves not only text book learning but also a growth of values, skills and capacities. This helps individuals to plan for their career as well as plays a useful part in building a new society with progressive values. The role of education in facilitating social and economic progress is well recognized. Improvements in the functional and analytic abilities of children and youth through education open up opportunities leading to both individual and group entitlements. Education in its broadest sense of development is the most crucial input for empowering people with skills knowledge and giving them access to productive and gainful employment in future. Improvements in education do not merely enhance efficiency but also augment democratic participation, upgrade health and overall equality of individual and social life.

Hence, much emphasis should be given at elementary level for the improvement of education, which is considered to be the foundation of higher education, child development and future.

**Elementary Education**

Elementary education is the foundation of the pyramid of the education system. Stemming from provisions enshrined in the directive principles of State policy and the 86$^{th}$ amendment in the Constitution of India, Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) has been one of the most important goals of education developed in India since independence and created a tremendous awareness among the masses regarding the importance of elementary education. It is here that we must ensure access to good quality education for all the sections of the population with special attention to the needs of SC, ST, OBC and minority communities and girls. Elementary education is the lynch-pin of the entire edifice of education. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has brought elementary education to the doorsteps of millions of children and enrolled them including first generation learners, through fast track

initiatives in either to unserved and underserved habitations. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is an effort to universalize elementary education by community- ownership of the school system. It is a response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country. The SSA programme is also an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities to the poorest children through provision of community – owned quality elementary education in a mission mode. The detailed description of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is provided below:

**Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is also known as the 'Education for All' movement. It was introduced in 2000- 2001 as the flagship programme run by the government of India. The scheme was framed to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan aims to bridge social, regional and gender gap, with the active participation of the community in the management of schools. SSA has two aspects:

(i) It provides a wide convergent for implementation of elementary education schemes.

(ii) It is also a programme with budget provisions for strengthening of elementary education.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a progamme with a clear time-frame for universal elementary education. It is an opportunity for promoting social justice through basic education, a partnership between central- state and the local government, an opportunity for state to develop their own vision of elementary education. SSA is also an effort at effectively involving the Panchayati Raj institutions, the school management committees (SMCs) the Tribal Autonomous Councils in the management of elementary schools. To achieve the objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, strategies have been framed that include active involvement of local community groups and institutional capacity building for setting up of Block level resource centre's. The centre's impart District Elementary Education Plans (DEEP). The framework of SSA includes appointment of teachers, their training, motivating parents and students, provisions of incentives like scholarships, uniform, text books etc. This programme also aims to open new schools in areas having inadequate schooling facilities and strengthen existing school infrastructure through

the construction of additional classrooms, provision of toilets, drinking water facilities and so on.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a valuable endeavour of the Governmentof India, in the Universalization of Elementary Education which strives to help citizens to realize the importance of elementary education. Provision of basic education also improves the standard of living, especially with regard to life expectancy, infant mortality and nutritional status of children.

For realizing the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) under SSA, Govt. of India laid emphasis on free and compulsory education for all the children of age 6 to 14 and finally in the year 2009, an Act entitled “Right of Children to free and compulsory education Act, 2009” was passed in the parliament for achieving the long cherished goal of UEE. A detail about RTE Act, 2009 is given ahead:

**Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009**

The Right of children to Free and Compulsory Education Act,2009 came into force from April 1, 2010. This was a historic day for the people of India as from this day, the right to education will be accorded the same legal status as the right to life as provided by Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. Every child in the age group of 6-14 years will be provided 8 years of elementary education in an age appropriate classroom in the vicinity of his/her neighborhood.

According to the Act, “any cost that prevents a child from accessing school will be borne by the State which shall have the responsibility of enrolling the child as well as ensuring attendance and completion of 8 years of schooling. No child shall be denied admission for want of documents; no child shall be turned away if the admission cycle in the school is over and no child shall be asked to take an admission test. Children with disabilities will also be educated in the mainstream schools.” The Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singh has emphasized that it is important for the country that if we nurture our children and young people with the right education, India's future as a strong and prosperous country is secure.

All private schools shall be required to enroll children from weaker sections and disadvantaged communities in their incoming class to the extent of 25% of total enrolment, by simple random selection. No seats in this quota can be left vacant.

These children will be treated on par with all the other children in the school and subsidized by the State at the rate of average per learner costs in the government schools (unless the per learner costs in the private school are lower).

All schools will have to prescribe to norms and standards laid out in the Act and no school that does not fulfill these standards within 3 years will be allowed to function. All private schools will have to apply for recognition, failing which they will be penalized to the tune of Rs. 1 lakh and if they still continue to function will be liable to pay Rs. 10,000 per day as fine. Norms and standards of teacher qualification and training are also being laid down by an academic authority. Teachers in all schools will have to subscribe to these norms within 5 years.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has been mandated to monitor the implementation of this historic Right. A special toll free helpline to register complaints has been set up by NCPCR for this purpose. NCPCR welcomes the formal notification of this Act and looks forward to playing an active role in ensuring its successful implementation.

For successful implementation of elementary programmes of education, people's participation or involvement of local community is of the utmost importance. This is because the school and community are related to each other in a cyclic relationship of mutual benefit. If the school serves the community through its education programmes, the community in turn, will help enhancing the status of the school. Therefore for achieving the goal of universalization of elementary education (UEE), the school management committees (SMCs) has been constituted in all elementary schools as mentioned in RTE Act, 2009. A brief description about SMCs is provided below:

**School Management Committees**

The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009 has mandated the constitution of SMC which is an example of decentralizing the education system more effective and to encourage participation of parents in the decision making process. As per the section 21 (1) and 21 (2) of right of children to free and compulsory education Act, all government and government-aided schools shall constitute school management committee (SMC) of the elected representatives of the local authority, parents and guardians of children admitted in such schools and

teachers. The School Management Committees have following two organs namely, the General body of School Management Committee and the Executive Council of School Management Committee.

**(1) General body of School Management Committee**

- In the general body of School Management Committee, all the parents/natural guardians of the students studying in the schools and the teachers working in such schools are included. The concerned Gram Panchyat/local body representatives of the concerned ward are the nominated members. Every year after the completion of academic session, the membership of those parents will automatically come to an end whose children/wards would have left the school after completion of their education and the parents of newly admitted children will automatically become member of the General Body of School Management Committee.
- The general body of School Management Committee will elect inits 1st meeting, from amongst its parent members, one parent to function as president of the School Management Committee. The tenure of the president thus elected is one year.
- General body of School Management Committee can organize their meetings as per their needs. But they have to organize following meetings. The first general meeting of SMC should be called within 15 days of commencement of new academic session, second meeting to be organized on teachers' day, the 5th September and third meeting to be organized on the day of declaration of final results. Besides this, the general body of School Management Committee can decide for calling meetings anytime in which 10 members should give prior notice to Member Secretary.
- The Headmaster and in his absence the senior most teacher of the school the nominated member secretary of SMC. He/She is responsible for keeping and maintaining the records of the meetings and also help in the implementation of the decisions taken in general body meetings of School Management Committee.
- At least 20% parents/guardians should be present in the general body meeting of School Management Committee The expenditure incurred on the meetings

of School Management Committee is borne out of school grants or out of prescribed accounts/head of the state government.

- The general body of School Management Committee approves the annual budget and also reviews the work and expenditure of previous year. During the meeting, general body can take-up any agenda items for discussion and decisions related to the improvement of school working, school development plan, utilization of school grant given by government from time to time.

**(2) Executive Committee of School Management Committee**

- The general body of School Management Committee also constitutes an executive council for the smooth implementation of works related to school and decisions taken by School Management Committee. Executive council is fully authorized to spend budget approved by general body and is responsible to SMC.
- In every complex, where primary, middle, high or senior secondary units exist; there would be only one general body of parents. Executive committee have in addition to the members specified for elementary schools, four parents of students from $9^{th}$ and $10^{th}$ classes taken together and two teachers teaching these classes. The Principal /Headmaster acts as member secretary for such schools.
- The elected president of School Management Committee and nominated member secretary are also the president and member secretary of executive council. The elected representative of gram panchayat and local elected ward member would also be the nominated member. In case of middle schools ($6^{th}$ to $8^{th}$ classes) in place of ward member, president or vice president of gram panchayat would be nominated members.
- The members of the executive body of the School Management Committee are elected in accordance with the RTE Act, 2009 provisions and for discharge of its functions effectively, the executive body of the SMC can co-opt members for expert suggestions (for example Anganwari worker, health worker, eminent educationist from the area, NGO member, Yuvak Mandal, MahilaMandal, teacher working in school or retired teacher etc). These members can participate in the discussions of SMCs but they cannot cast vote.

- Executive committee would be responsible for implementation of decisions taken by SMC and for this purpose; monthly meetings of the Executive Committee will be held on the first Saturday (in case of Saturday being a holiday, on first Friday) after lunch break. Expenditure for these meetings would be met out of school maintenance grant. The minutes of the meeting would be recorded and maintained by member secretary in a register. This register shall be available for public scrutiny and perusal.
- Member secretary of Executive council would record the signature of all members. The major points of decisions would be displayed on the school notice board. If due to any reason, the president of SMC is not in a position to attend the meeting of executive committee, any other member present in the meeting could be nominated as pro-tern president with the consent of a majority of members. In the presence of regular president, the proceedings would be submitted for observation/orders.

**Powers and Responsibilities of School Management Committee**

School Management Committee with the help of its executive committee has the authority to perform following functions:

i. Steps would be taken for enrollment, ensure retention and reduce dropout to achieve the Universalization of Education.
ii. To ensure quality education and to monitor learning level of students regularly, student's evaluation will be monitored by the system of Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation and the progress cards should be discussed with parents and remedial steps be taken accordingly.
iii. To develop, implement and monitor school development plan.
iv. To ensure proper utilization of grants received from government and other agency.
v. To ensure timely availability of free text books, writing material, uniform grants and scholarships to the students.
vi. To ensure the implementation, quality and monitoring of Mid -Day Meals.
vii. To provide clean drinking water and toilet facility and to ensure cleanliness of toilets and school premises.

viii. To organize regular medical checkup for students in convergence with department of health and also to maintain health cards.

ix. To ensure the implementation of provisions of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Elementary Education Act, 2009.

x. Ensure regular attendance of students and teachers. School Management committee will be empowered to bring to the notice of CHT/BEEOs for necessary action, the instances of absence and irregularity in observing school timings by teachers. CHT/BEEOs will take necessary action on the request and inform the same to Deputy Director (Education). If in the general house of the SMC or by two third majority of members of the executive committee, any recommendation is made in this context, then departmental officer will be bound to take time-bound decision in the matter.

xi. If in the general house of the SMC, while praising the special contribution of any teacher in the development of the school or the students, in its last meeting of the academic session recommends that such teacher should not be transferred and the general house sends such resolution to the Deputy Director of education, then such teacher shall not be transferred from such school during the next one session. Similarly, if the general house of the SMC is not satisfied with the work of any teacher, and that teacher has completed her/his normal tenure in the school, such teacher shall be transferred from that school. Such matters can be taken up for discussion only during the meeting convened after declaration of examination result and in no other meeting, such decision can be taken.

xii. The School Management Committee will carry out the annual appraisal of the work done by the part time and the contract workers and the renewal of the contract will be done on the recommendations of the School Management Committee.

xiii. In proper identification of CWSN and bring them within the fold of integrated education.

xiv. To provide support in the co-curricular programmes, bal-melas, science fairs and sports activities and increase the participation of the community.

xv. To make various purchases for the school, subject to budget availability. For instance, the teaching-learning material, furniture, stationary and other items required for the school, lab instruments, library books, writing material for the

students as per government schemes, various kits, school dresses, computer and related equipment etc.

xvi. To carry-out the construction work/repair work of the school building and other infrastructural facilities. The SMC will have the authority to carry out the construction/repairs itself or get it done as per the directions of the department. For this purpose, the SMC may constitute a sub-committee or may enter into a contract with a competent institution or the gram panchayat.

xvii. The utilization of the annual school grant and the maintenance grant shall also be done through the School Management Committee.

xviii. To ensure proper utilization of the library available in the school for increasing the habit of reading amongst the students.

xix. If required, then to select and manage the part-time/ contract teachers as per the government policy but the SMC will not have the authority to appoint any part time/contract worker without the approval of the authorized officer.

xx. To submit the annual report of the SMC in the general house and to make available, its one copy to the concerned gram panchayat and the centre head teacher.

xxi. Financial resources of the School Management Committee.

**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

**Jagannathan** (1999) in his study of six NGOs working with school-age children in India shows the potential benefits of a government-NGOs alliance to achieve universal primary education. The researcher emphasized several areas in which collaboration can be particularly fruitful which mainly included; targeting underserved children, enhancing quality and developing a cadre of trainers for primary school teachers. It was suggested that NGO models would be a useful tool for teacher training institutes. NGOs and the government could collaborate in developing appropriate and flexible learning assessment tools, in line with innovative teaching and learning methods. The government and NGOs will need to share a common vision on how to achieve universal primary education if India is to reach this goal. NGOs can be credible partners with the government in shaping policies for primary education. This entails collaboration rather than parallel initiatives by NGOs. It was held that, if NGOs are to play a policy role in education, two areas that have been

neglected viz. NGO capacity building and organizational development will need to be addressed.

**Sudhakar and Sugunakumari (1999)** in their study revealed that half of the sampled parents recommended the establishment of a village education committee (VEC) to supervise the working of the school and its management.

**Sujatha and Rao (2000)** conducted a study on "Community Participation in Education in Tribal Areas: Study of Maabadies (community schools) in Vishakhapatnam District of Andhra Pradesh". They found that the VECs in this area had been clearly involved in planning and implementation of educational intervention and conduct at least one meeting in a month. Interestingly more than 80 per cent heads of the household, even those who were not VEC members, attended the VEC meetings. There were cases where the VEC collected money from the community and paid salary to the teachers from the community funds. In about three-fourth (70per cent) of the villages, new school buildings were also constructed by the community either by providing manpower or material or money. Mothers' Committees were also constituted in some villages to help the VEC in the management and preparation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme. The study establishes that, on the whole, the VEC in this area functioned satisfactorily.

**Vimala (2001)** recommended community participation in the specific context of people who have little or no access to basic education. An atmosphere has to be created for providing a supportive environment for girls' participation.

**Dash and Panda (2001)** revealed in their study that most of the village education committees worked excellently for all round development of primary schools. All the VECs took care of the management work of primary schools satisfactorily. VECs organised different awareness programmes satisfactorily for attitudinal change of villagers. Facilitation role of all VECs were very impressive. VECs undertook different steps to improve the financial status of primary schools. Proper care and management of primary schools, taking steps to increase enrolment and to reduce drop-out rate, organising different cultural activities in schools, working for development of school environment and helping the teacher to prepare TLM were significant works of VEC, which significantly affected the environment of the local primary schools. Facilitation role, attitudinal role, school improvement role, economic

activities and miscellaneous works have been performed by VECs effectively for all round development of the respective school. It was further reported that the role of VECs is very essential and important for the improvement of primary education. The success stories of different VECs would certainly act as examples for the weaker VECs so as to improve working style for improvement of management system and effective participation to achieve universalization of elementary education.

**Ed. CIL (2002)** in its study on "role of family, community and school factors In improving retention and achievement level of disadvantaged children" underlines that training imparted to VEC members motivate them to help in enhancing enrolment and retention of disadvantaged children in their respective schools. In the area of the study training of VEC members increased the parent teacher interaction and about 94 percent parents started visiting the schools. 63 per cent parents reported to have had a good relationship with teachers. The study further highlighted that most of the parents held the view that the education is not seen to be a useful preposition as long as the employability of the children is not assured. Nevertheless many parents regarded education as valuable but their poverty kept their children away from school. The increase in dropout rate of children as per most of these parents was due to poverty and involvement of children in domestic work. It was rather unfortunate that the upper caste teachers did not like to have meetings with lower class parents. Many parents in the areas of the study wanted introduction of vocational education at lower level of schooling so that education proves useful to their children. Provision of mid-day meals, scholarships and free text books had played a vital role in increasing enrolment and retention of disadvantaged children but their achievement level still remained poor. Poor teacher–pupil ratio was a big problem for children. Although there was improvement in infrastructural facilities and school atmosphere but still much more was to be done. Use of Teaching Learning Material (TLM) had attracted children of disadvantaged community to a great extent. According to the study DPEP has greatly changed the attitude of the people about education.

**Vaijayanti (2005)** examined various aspects of involving the community in elementary education with particular reference to the role of School Development and Monitoring Committee SMDCs) in Karnataka. The major scope of the study was to know the a) general facilities available in the village to ensure universalization of Elementary Education; b) Level of awareness of the members about the various

aspects of the SDMC and their socio-economic status and their degree of participation in school; c) to know the availability of information about SDMCs and d) Procedure and process adopted for their formation; and the perception of government functionaries on the functioning of SDMCs. The study was carried out across 469 schools and over 4,500 stakeholders in eight districts of Karnataka were interviewed. The major recommendations of the Study are following:

1. SDMCs should be continued and their autonomy protected by insulating them against political interference -both in their formation and day-to-day functioning.
2. There is ambiguity and confusion in the prevailing Government circular on the formation of SDMCs. Modifications suggested while retaining the content and spirit of the first executive order.
3. Involve SDMC members with reasonable qualifications (SSLC and above) in curriculum construction, teacher training and other academic issues; a register be maintained to record the visits and the suggestions made by members.
4. Encourage all schools to maintain a list of alumni to collect contributions from them for the corpus fund. The list to be prepared in consultation with SDMC members.
5. Create a platform to share 'Best Practices' among the SDMCs at cluster level and arrange exposure visits for the members to schools where SDMCs are functioning effectively.
6. Arrange periodic meetings by SDMC presidents in a block / cluster to share their experience. And Sabha / Gram Panchayat meetings should discuss school issues.

**Yadav (2006)** in his study on role and performance of VECs in Haryana suggested that only those member should be nominated who are at least matriculate and there must be a fixed tenure for each member. It should be made mandatory for all members to attend the meetings. Community leaders should extend full cooperation to VECs for better functioning of the schools. In his study he found out that there was no sharing of the responsibility among the VEC members while only four VECs have made contribution towards construction of classrooms and drinking water facilities. There was no coordination and rapport between Parent Teachers

Association and the VEC although there were two representatives of PTA in each VEC.

**Bandyopadhyay and Ramya (2008)** concluded that while enrolment of girls has increased rapidly since the 1990s, there is still a substantial gap in upper primary and secondary schooling and gender inequalities interlock with other forms of social inequality, notably caste, ethnicity and religion. It was recommended that in order to meet the challenges for improving the quality of schools, ensuring better opportunities for girls at higher level of education, notably upper primary and secondary schools, there is need for implementation of enabling policy guidelines.

**Nayak, (2009)** in his book on Community Participation in the Universalisation of Primary Education emphasizes that people's direct participation in the management of primary education is felt indispensable and inevitable for materializing long cherished goal of universalisalion of primary education. Specific efforts in various forms have been launched to revitalize the school-community relationships that can be gainfully channelized for quantitative as well as qualitative improvement of primary education in the country. This book is based on a study of eight villages across two districts of Orissa and focuses on the role of the community in planning, management and organization of school activities. It explores the actual and expected roles of the School Management Committees (SMCs) in school governance. A total of 160 respondents were drawn on the basis of purposive sampling across 64 SMCs in the State. The study found that the working of the SMCs was not at all satisfactory. The meetings are either not held at all or, if held, they are just once in a year. One-third respondents stated that the SMC members did not attend the SMC meetings whenever they are held. Various problems perceived as impediments in the working of the SMCs were inadequacy of teachers, poverty of members, lack of sufficient financial aids, lack of coordination among members, inadequacy of classrooms, and lack of incentives for SMC members, political interference and reservation of SMC seats in the village community. Interestingly gender of the chairman of SMC was perceived to be important for the effective functioning of these bodies. The men argued that they are better in governing the SMC than their women counterparts. The study further underlined that caste, class; gender and political affiliation of members do affect the functioning of the SMC in multiple ways.

**Rao (2009)** in his study evaluated the working of the school education management committee (SEMC) in a tribal area of East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. The respondents for the study were members of the SEMCs. Among the three categories in each SEMC, two parents out of four, one member of the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) either panchayat president or panchayat ward member whoever was available – and all schoolteachers/headmasters (in the study area most of the schools were single teacher schools or with a maximum of two teachers) were covered. 125 respondents were selected by simple random sampling from 26 SEMCs in 26 sampled villages of the three mandalas. The study found that that community participation in improving education is negligible and that members of the school education management committees have limited awareness of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The study indicated that more than 67% of all categories of the respondents were aware of SSA. An overwhelming majority (87.2%) of the schoolteachers were aware of SSA, whereas in the case of PRI members it was 61% and among parents of the school-going children, the percentage was 52%. The SEMC members (17%) suggested that creating awareness among the tribal parents would enable them to participate in school related activities. The other suggestions were to introduce mid-day meal programme on a daily basis in the schools, making drinking water available in the premises, use of TLM materials by teachers, provision of better infrastructure schools and so on. All these suggestions reveal that the tribal community members were participating in some way or the other in school-related activities. These community level structures i.e. SEMCs play a key role in micro-planning, especially in the development of a village education plan and school improvement plans.

**Govinda and Bandyopadhyay (2010)** reported that in recent years, strengthening and better functioning of local governance have become prime concern of educational reform agenda. Establishment of effective local governance has been part of overall changes in educational governance for several years in many countries including India. It is now widely recognised that effective local governance considerably impacts on access to education as well as the enrolment, retention and learning experiences of children in school. An attempt has also been made by them to examine the extent to which grassroots level functionaries and local bodies like panchayat and SMCs are able to get involved in decision making processes and

different approaches that have been taken by different states in regards to local governance of education. While discussing the changing framework of local governance, they had critically examined the guiding principles of governance reform from two perspectives i.e. 'Top-down' and 'bottom-up' approach in terms of ensuring effectiveness of the system and empowering people for active participation in decentralized decision making process.

**Aikara (2011)** studied the decentralization of elementary education and community participation in Kerala. There are two structures for decentralization of elementary education. One is the representatives of the local self-government while the other is in form of representatives of civil society organizations. In the process of decentralization in school education all state schools in the state are brought under local self-governments. Involvement of civil society is a form of both decentralization and community participation. Participation of the local self-government is the result of the direct dispersion of power from the State government whereas the civil society participation in elementary education can be considered as the result of 'deemed to be decentralization' in so far as the state recognizes and/or supports the efforts of the representatives of civil society organizations in providing elementary education. According to the author although there is decentralization in the form of state systems and state-civil society partnerships, the major aspects of school education are with the centralized state department of education. The local self-government and the civil society elements function for certain aspects of elementary education that are decentralized from the state central authority. The main function decentralized to them is the provision and maintenance of infrastructure of the school under their jurisdiction. Decentralization of education in Kerala has not resulted in greater 76 participation of the stakeholders like teachers and parents in school management. The author has stressed that for decentralization to lead to greater community participation, there is a need for more convergence of state support and the social capital of the civil society.

**Zingkhai and Asung (2011)** in their article published in the *Sangai Express* bring out the dismal state of affairs of Village Education Committee in the state of Manipur. According to the authors, in 2011 alone, in the month of April, these bodies were known as VEC (Village Education Committee) chaired by the Headman, in the month of May, they were named as SMDC (School Management and Development

Committee) chaired by the Headmaster, and in the month of June, the name was further changed to SMC (School Management Committee) chaired by the District Councilor. Highlighting the misadventures in governance of the Government of the State of Manipur, the authors laments that the composition and nomenclature and its frequent changes of the village level education committees in the hills, is more surprising and interesting. The trajectory of the three different types of nomenclature and composition of the committees in just three months does not show these bodies in a good light. The first Committee which was known as VEC, till 15th April, 2011, had the Headman/Chief as the ex-officio Chairman. The second Committee that short lived for less than two months was known as the SMDC with Headmaster (or the senior most teachers in the absence of Headmaster) as the ex-officio Chairman. The third Committee which is the latest is known as the School Management Committee (SMC) as per vide order NO.30/19/09 –SE(S), Secretariat: Education Department (School Section), dated the 14th June, 2011, which says that the Member of District Council of the area in which the school is located shall be the Chairman/Chairperson of the School Management Committee (SMC). The Headmaster (or senior most teachers in absence of Headmaster) shall be the Member Secretary. The Bank account of the Committee shall be operated jointly by the Headmaster and Executive Director of DRDA concerned. As per the opinion of the authors the District Councilors instead of strengthening the efficiency of village level committees, have an implicit intention of institutionalizing a covert ploy to loot the money granted, which in the end, would also loot the 'Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education' asserts the authors.

**Owusu and Sam (2012)** conducted a study to assess the role of school management committee (SMCs) in improving quality teaching in Ashanti Mampong municipal township basic junior high schools through the views of head teachers and SMC Members. The design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey. A simple random sampling method was used to select a sample size of thirty (30) respondents. Questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents, validated by the researchers and analysed by the use of descriptive statistics. The findings indicated that SMCs were ineffective in the monitoring and supervision of head teachers', teacher's and pupils' attendance. Even though SMCs are not doing enough to assist teachers to improve teaching and learning, they are seen as very effective in solving

school community relations since SMCs are relatively on task on the issue of serving as a vehicle for promoting community participation in the provision of quality education. Finally, it was recommended that much effort is needed to be done by SMCs in the Ashanti Mampong municipal schools to raise the standard of basic education.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has been launched for realizing the target of UEE in India. It is a programme with clear-cut time frame for realizing its objectives in a mission mode. In the line of efforts to achieve such long term goal, the Government of India has enacted Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE) 2009, which came into force from April 1st 2010. According to this Act, the constitution of SMCs has been made mandatory so as to improve the community participation at school level. It is an example of decentralizing the education system, making it more effective and to encourage participation of parents in the process of decision making. This is a noble effort for interlinking the school and community to act in a mutually responsive manner. Under RTE Act 2009, certain responsibilities and powers have been given to elected representatives of SMC and their roles are well defined in the document. The present investigation is an effort to study the functioning of SMCs at elementary education level and to identify the bottlenecks that are creating hindrances in mobilizing community for improving educational status of the concerned area. The results of present study will be beneficial in planning and chalking out different intervention strategies so that the functioning of SMCs in elementary schools can be strengthened.

The results of present study will be helpful in identifying the awareness level of SMC members regarding their role and responsibilities in promoting UEE because until and unless, the SMC members are not aware about their responsibilities, the success of SMCs in terms of enhancing community participation cannot be achieved.

Moreover, the status of elementary education in tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh is not so encouraging at present as compared to the other parts of the State. Hence, the investigator thought it worthwhile to propose the present investigation which will mainly focus on the functioning of SMCs and their role in improving the status of elementary education in tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh.

Through the present investigation, an effort will be made by the investigator to study the contribution made by SMC members and various steps taken by SMCs for ensuring girls' participation in elementary education, education of children with special need (CWSN) and schedule cast (SC) students which is the need of the day. Also, the investigator will analyze content and methodology of various training programmes organized for SMC members so as to ensure their full participation in elementary education affairs. These results will help the organizers of training programmes to bring suitable modifications in the content and pedagogical aspects of such training programmes.

On the basis of results of the present study, the suggestions will be laid down for making SMCs more effective and efficient so that the target of UEE can be realized specifically in tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh. These suggestions will be based on the views of state functionaries, DIET faculty members, elementary school teachers and SMC members who are indirectly or directly involved in planning and implementation of various schemes and strategies so as to enhance community participation in elementary education affairs. The suggestions given by aforesaid stakeholders will definitely assist the policy makers, educationists and other concerned government authorities in devising different plans for improving the status of elementary education in tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh.

Keeping this into consideration, the investigator proposes to undertake a research study which is stated as under:

***"A Critical Study of School Management Committees (SMCs) at Elementary Level in Tribal Areas of Himachal Pradesh"***

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1) To study the process of formation, powers and responsibilities of school management committees (SMCs) in elementary schools of Himachal Pradesh (H.P.)
2) To study the role of SMCs in promotion of elementary education in tribal areas of H.P. in terms of criteria laid down under RTE Act, 2009.
3) To study the functioning of SMCs in terms of:
    i. Time gap between SMC meetings
    ii. Agendas of SMC meetings

iii. Attendance of SMC members in meetings.

iv. Other issues discussed in SMC meetings.

4) To study the content and methodology of training programmes, organized for SMC members in order to ensure their full participation in elementary education affairs.

5) To identify specific steps initiated by SMCs (in the light of RTE Act, 2009) for improving following aspects of elementary education in tribal areas of H.P.

i. Ensuring girls participation in elementary education.

ii. Focus on education of Children With Special Needs (CWSN)

6) To study the special contribution made by SMC members for improvement of educational facilities in elementary schools of tribal areas of H.P.

7) To find out, if any monitoring mechanism for SMCs is in place and how the work and accountability of SMCs is assured.

8) To study the views of following stakeholders regarding role and functioning of SMCs in promoting UEE in tribal areas of H.P.:-

(i) Mission Director and State Project Director (SSA), Govt. of H.P.

(ii) Deputy Director (Elementary Education).

(iii) Faculty members of District Institute of Education and Training (DIET).

(iv) Elementary School Teachers.

9) To study the awareness among SMC members regarding their role and responsibilities in promoting UEE in tribal areas of H.P.

10) To identify the problems faced by SMCs in promoting UEE in tribal areas of H.P. in context of RTE Act, 2009.

11) To lay down suggestions for more effective functioning of SMCs for promoting UEE in tribal areas of H.P.

**OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS**

**1. Critical Study**

It refers to analyzing the status, functioning and contribution of SMCs in elementary schools under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in the state of H.P. against the criteria of evaluating SMCs' role as laid down in Right to Education (RTE) document and document of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) by Ministry of Human

Resource Development (HRD), Government of India. Following major roles and responsibilities have been entrusted upon SMCs under RTE Act, 2009:

i. Developing and maintaining school infrastructure.
ii. Enhancing enrolment and reducing drop-out rate.
iii. School planning and school improvement programmes.
iv. Managing financial assistance.
v. Ensuring cooperation and co-ordination between school authorities and local community for community mobilization in Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE).
vi. Management of different school affairs like overseeing academic programmes, teacher appointments and teacher attendance etc.
vii. Maintaining SMC registers and other official records.

**2. Tribal Areas**

These are the remote areas that remain alienated from rest of the country and where people with distinct lifestyle and culture live. These areas are enlisted in Indian constitution as tribal areas so that various policies and programmes can be formulated and implemented for their upliftment.

**3. School Management Committees (SMCs)**

School management committees refer to those bodies which are constituted in all government and government aided elementary schools under RTE Act, 2009 for decentralizing the education system to make it more effective and to encourage participation of parents in decision making process related to the education of their wards. Under section 21(1) and 21(2) of RTE Act, 2009, the SMC is comprised of the elected representatives of the local authority, parents/guardians and teachers of children admitted in schools. The school management committees have two organs namely, the general body and the executive council.

**4. Elementary Level**

It refers to the stage of education for the children of age group of 6-14 years who are studying in the class from $1^{st}$ to $8^{th}$. It includes both primary and upper primary school levels.

## DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1) The process of formation of SMCs in elementary schools and their defined roles and responsibilities will be studied through documentary analysis.
2) The functioning of SMCs with regard to promotion of UEE will be evaluated on basis of views of H.P state functionaries (SPO, SSA and State Directorate of Elementary Education), Deputy Directors, DIET faculty members, elementary school teachers and office bearers and members of SMSs in the elementary schools situated in tribal areas of H.P.
3) The present study will be delimited to two tribal districts i.e. Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti of H.P.
4) The content and methodology of training programmes organized for SMC members will be studied through documentary analysis as well as on the basis of views of DIET faculty members and SMC members. In this context, no real observation of such training programmes will be carried out by investigator.
5) Both primary and secondary sources of data will be employed for realizing the objectives of the present study. The data for present study will be collected through self-developed interview schedules and questionnaires.The government documents and reports will considered to be the secondary sources of data.

## RESEARCH METHOD TO BE ADOPTED

The purpose of the present study is to inquire critically into the functioning of SMCs in the field of elementary education under SSA in tribal areas of H.P. Hence, to achieve this major objective of the study, survey technique under descriptive method of research will be employed in the following manner:

1) Survey method will be applied for seeking views of H.P state functionaries of elementary education, Deputy Directors, DIET faculty members, elementary school teachers and office bearers and members of SMC regarding role and functioning of SMC for promotion of UEE in tribal areas of the state.
2) Documentary analysis will be carried out to study the process of formation of SMCs in elementary schools, their powers and responsibilities for achieving the goal of UEE especially in tribal areas of the state.

In nut shell, present study will be solely qualitative in nature.

**SAMPLING**

The interviews at the state level will be held with the following personnels:

i. Director, Elementary Education Government of H.P.

ii. State Project Director, SPO, SSA, Government of H.P.

Both the DPOs (Principal, DIET) and Deputy Directors of selected tribal districts will be approached for seeking their views regarding role and functioning of SMCs in their respective districts.

The same purposive sampling technique will be employed in case of faculty members of DIETs of Kinnaur and Lahaul Spiti districts. All DIET faculty members of these two DIETs who will be readily available and willing to supply the necessary information as asked in the self-developed questionnaire will be taken into consideration for present study.

The present study will be delimited to two tribal districts i.e. Kinnaur and Lahaul Spiti of H.P. It is pertinent to mention that there are other tribal areas in the state which form part of other districts, but these two districts are the only districts in the state of Himachal Pradesh which are completely tribal in nature. Moreover, these two districts will be selected by the researcher exclusively because they share many common elements like geographical terrains, climatic conditions, social and cultural set-up. Out of these two districts, the investigator will at least cover one-third of the elementary schools (primary and upper primary schools to be taken separately) which will be selected on the basis of convenience to the researcher (easy accessibility). From such selected schools, all the elementary schools teachers who will be available at the time of data collection will be taken into the sample for the present study. The selection of SMC office bearers and members will be made by employing purposive sampling technique. All such SMC members who will be conveniently available and willing to provide the requisite information on the self-developed questionnaire will be taken into consideration for the present study.

**RESEARCH TOOLS TO BE DEVELOPED**

Following research tools will be developed by the investigator for conducting the present study:

1. **Interview Schedule for Functionaries of H.P. State Directorate of Elementary Education (Mission Director and State Project Director, SSA)**

This schedule will be meant for the personnels working at state directorate level and who are directly or indirectly involved in planning and implementation of various intervention strategies and schemes under SSA in H.P. This schedule will be used to seek information about the following:

i. Views with regard to participation level of SMC members in elementary education affairs.
ii. Opinion with regard to various inputs and support provided to SMCs for effective functioning.
iii. Providing support to DIETs for giving further inputs to SMCs in elementary schools.
iv. Mechanism for monitoring the functioning of SMCs in the field.
v. Effectiveness of SMCs with regard to promotion of girls' education, community mobilization and education of CWSN.
vi. Constraints in effective functioning of SMCs for promoting UEE in tribal areas of H.P.
vii. Suggestions to improve functioning of SMCs in elementary schools.

This interview schedule will be structured in nature comprising of open-ended questions.

**2. Interview schedule for Deputy Director (Elementary Education)**

An interview schedule will be developed for the Deputy Directors (Elementary Education) to elicit their views regarding functioning of SMCs in their respective districts. This schedule will be structured in nature comprising of both close-ended as well as open-ended questions. The items / questions in this interview schedule will be similar to some extent as in case of interview schedule developed for functionaries of elementary education of state level.

**3. Questionnaire for DPOs and DIET Faculty**

A separate questionnaire having both open-ended as well as close-ended type questions will be developed for the faculty members of selected DIETs. This structured questionnaire will mainly focus on following aspects:-

i. Personal information of DIET faculty members.
ii. Awareness of DIET faculty members regarding conceptualized (defined) role of SMCs for promoting UEE.

iii. Opinion of DIET faculty members with regard to functioning of SMCs in elementary schools.
iv. Academic and technical support provided to DIET faculty members by SPO, SSA or other higher authorities for improving the functioning and effectiveness of SMCs.
v. Training programmes organized for SMC members by DIET.
vi. Functioning of SMCs specifically for promoting girls' education, community involvement and education of CWSN.
vii. Problems of SMCs for effective functioning in elementary schools.
viii. Suggestions for improving the functioning of SMCs in elementary schools.

**4. Questionnaire for Elementary School Teachers**

For eliciting the views of elementary school teachers regarding SMCs and their functioning in elementary schools, a structured questionnaire comprising of both close as well as open-ended type questions will be developed by the investigator himself. This questionnaire will mainly concentrate on teachers' personal details, teaching experience and their views with regard to functioning of SMCs in their respective schools. This questionnaire will also revolve around seeking of teachers' opinion about problems faced by SMCs and school authorities for promoting UEE and suggestions will be obtained from them so as to improve the functioning of SMCs and enhance the quality of elementary education in tribal areas of H.P.

**5. Questionnaire for SMC Members**

For obtaining information about SMC, their composition, agendas discussed in meetings and other aspects related to functioning of SMC in respective elementary schools. A separate questionnaire will be designed for SMC office bearers and members. This exclusive questionnaire will also be structured in nature having both close-ended as well as open-ended type questions based on following issues:

i. Personal information of SMC members.
ii. Views of SMC members with regard to composition and election of members to SMC.
iii. Awareness about responsibilities and powers delegated to SMCs.

iv. Functioning of SMCs for improving quality of education in elementary schools.

v. Activities organized by SMCs in elementary schools.

vi. Special steps taken by SMCs for promoting girls' education, community mobilization and education of CWSN.

vii. Contributions made by SMC members for improving various facilities in elementary schools.

viii. Academic and technical support provided to SMCs by DIETs and other functionaries for improving its functioning.

ix. Nature of training programmes organized for SMC members.

x. Co-operation provided by SMC members, school authorities and other community members for uplifting the status of elementary education in the schools.

xi. Mechanism for monitoring the functioning and progress of SMCs.

xii. Problems faced by SMCs for effective functioning.

xiii. Suggestions for improving the functioning of SMCs in promoting UEE.

**DATA COLLECTION**

The data for the present study will be collected personally by the investigator in a phased manner. First of all, the interviews with functionaries at state level will be conducted by the researcher.

In the second phase, the data will be collected from Deputy Directors of two districts with the help of self-developed interview schedule.

In the third phase, the data will be collected from DIET principals and faculty members of two districts by administering self-developed questionnaire so as to seek their views regarding the role and functioning of SMCs in promoting UEE.

In the fourth phase, self-developed questionnaire will be administered on selected SMC office bearers and member to study their awareness level regarding roles and responsibilities in promoting UEE.

In last and final phase, data will be collected from elementary school teachers to seek their views about role and functioning of SMCs in promoting UEE.

Apart from this, for studying the process of formation of SMCs in elementary schools, their powers and responsibilities in the field of elementary education under SSA in tribal areas of H.P., different documents and reports will be reviewed by the investigator.

**TREATMENT OF DATA**

The information collected from state functionaries of elementary education and Deputy Directors with the help of respective interview schedules will be analyzed by employing content analysis technique.

The information collected from Deputy Directors, DPOs (Principals DIET), DIET faculty members, elementary school teachers and office bearers and members of SMC through self-developed questionnaires will be put to percentage analysis. Along with this, the technique of content analysis will be employed to give meaning to the data.

The data collected through government documents and reports will also be analyzed by employing content analysis technique so as to look into the actual functioning of SMCs in the field.

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